# VELMA FRUHLING
## Vacaville Unified School District

## TEACHER OF THE YEAR - 1973

## *Biographical Sketch & Philosophy of Teaching*

### INTRODUCTION

People teach for many reasons, some for fun, some for salary, and some because they enjoy seeing people learn. I think I began teaching because first of all, I saw the need to help someone. While still in high school, I taught piano lessons by parental request and Sunday School because of the need. While in college, I started my seventh grade brother in piano, and today, he, too, *is* a school music teacher, as I am. I taught my own three children piano lessons for many years. There was no youth choir in our church, so while attending college, I would on my weekends home, gather up young people and invite them down to the church to sing, thus starting my first choir which I enjoyed immensely. Since then, I have directed innumerable church choirs of all ages, school choruses from the fourth through the eighth grades, also private teenage choirs in my home. Although I love art such as oil painting, my life as been dedicated mostly to the art of music. Working with youth in connection with music has been my life-long hobby, and that is something in which one takes pride and tries to do one's best. Therefore, this article mainly concerns <u>music</u> teaching.

### PRINCIPLES

I have certain principles which govern my teaching.

First of all, I believe that *as* teachers, we should present to the students the best that each of us is capable of presenting. Then we have done a great deal towards uplifting the forth-coming generation.

I believe that a teacher should in her presentation strive to be able to demonstrate what she considers to be the correct methods of approach, to learning desired techniques. In order to do these things, a teacher must constantly seek to improve herself by reading, by practice, by attending excellent workshops, by knowing what is new in music and education in general, not just for units or salary increment only, but to have new, varied, and fascinating ideas and materials ever ready to produce better and up-to-date teaching.

The next thing of importance in music is choice of materials which one forever must be seeking. In presenting a variety of selections, one should use not only materials to which youngsters should have an introduction, but also ones which take them into consideration by including music of their choice. However, I feel we should be selective. Just to have a catchy tune or an interesting harmony in a song is not enough. The text must be such that it is wholesome, good fun, or uplifting to teenagers. I can't justify using words of lower standards, especially since we as teachers are molding the youth who take over the world of tomorrow.

If any teacher thinks back to why any workshop attended was profitable, fun, and instructive, one probably remembers the teacher as being an integral part of that workshop. I think as an instructor should strive to demonstrate, know her or his subject so well, and teach in such an interesting way, that young people not only learn the fundamentals in class, but are

challenged to get in an dig to improve themselves outside of school. That's exactly the kind of behavioral results we hope to achieve as a result of our guidance and teaching. A teacher should want to know the residue of a child's experience when he is no longer in her class. Has he just regurgitated facts for you and left them there on paper, or has he been guided to explore his interests in such a way that he acquires lasting knowledge and understanding, skills of performing, and greater appreciation and feeling for music, in order that he takes with him something from your class? Doesn't that, then, require the very best we can possibly offer - a very demanding and time consuming, but because of the nature of youth, a never boring task? One of my sons changed from engineering to teaching because he said he noticed my job as a teacher was never boring. Now he has a master's degree in math from Stanford University. Although he had already been Junior Engineer for Salano County while attending Davis University, had been head of a crew surveying and constructing a new paved road at Putah Creek, could have had a greater salary, he wisely chose teaching to have a more complete and interesting life, and to help others.

We as teachers must realize that each student is a living human being, and has feelings just as we do. We should strive to know each student, to call him by name as soon as possible at the start of each new class, to show him that we do <u>care</u>, and <u>share</u> his concern about himself, what he is learning, and what he will make of himself. Each of us must, as a teacher, be a team member of a class, not a big authoritative boss, but one who plans, with and for the youngsters, one who controls in an indirect way so students learn by doing for themselves as much as possible, one who is always there as a helpful guide to assist when needed, and one who always seeks to instruct for their good. The essence of a good teacher is similar to that of a good doctor in that if there's a problem, it is diagnosed, and a remedy prescribed. If the youngsters in a class no longer look involved and interested, then we as teachers are failing. Even the physical environment in a classroom and the part played by both teacher and students in creating it makes for a more wholesome atmosphere and a greater learning situation.

A teacher must have interest and enthusiasm for her subject in order to mirror the same in her pupils. She must see that what is taught has meaning for the students. She must have ingenuity, creativity, and imagination, for the musician must have more than just a knowledge of sharps and flats in order to produce an artistic performance.

## CONCLUSION

Teaching is not the easiest job. It will require the best a teacher has to offer. Other positions might have higher pay, but could there be any more varied and challenging than the one dealing with the most precious thing in the universe, our youth, and who, in turn, will influence others? With deep emotion, a teacher receives the greatest of rewards when a former student walks up and says, "Because of you, I am going to be a teacher, too." A good teacher, then becomes as eternity. One never knows where her or his influence ends. And the music teacher should never forget, that in doing her best job, she is leading through class music and concerts in school and community the most inspirational, profitable, and never to be forgotten experiences of understanding and love, mixed with the greatest of languages - that of "Music!"

***By Velma Fruhling***